

of God and by the way ; in the solemn assembly and in the family circle, in a manner that will be characterized by painstaking plainness, wisdom, gravity, affection, fidelity and cheerfulness. It is, therefore, the duty of the Gospel minister to declare seasonably and in their proportion the doctrines of revealed religion. These comprehend all those truths which relate to the being and perfections of God ; his creation, preservation, and government of his universe ; the original state of man ; the condition into which he has brought himself by sin ; the grace and pity of God manifested in the procurement of redemption ; the person and offices of Christ ; His life of humiliation and death of agony ; his resurrection and glorious exaltation to the right-hand of God ; the nature of the Holy Spirit, and his saving work in all who are the heirs of everlasting life ; the resurrection of the body ; the judgment to come ; the blessedness of the saved in heaven and the misery of the lost in perdition. These doctrines are termed "the mystery of the faith," which is to be held in a pure conscience, "the faith once delivered unto the Saints," for which we are earnestly to contend. They are the foundation of true religion and morality, and are, therefore, first to be made known. And it is by means of these doctrines that sinners are renewed and sanctified and saved. Such effects are never produced by idle speculation nor erroneous fancies, but only by the truth as it is in Jesus. And hence the absurdity of assuming that persons are converted to God who are ignorant of these fundamental truths of our holy Christianity ; the profanity of pronouncing them the useless peculiarities of a system ; and the inconsistency with ministerial fidelity of modifying them so as to render them less offensive to the unregenerate mind ; and hence, too, the necessity of exhibiting them systematically as a part of the whole counsel of God which Gospel ministers are under the strongest possible obligation to declare.

But it also includes matters of grace and privilege which must be experienced and enjoyed by every true Christian. Christianity is not a mere speculation. It engages the heart as well as the mind. It finds exercise for the affections as well as the understanding. That we are by nature guilty, depraved, ignorant, and helpless, are truths which we must not only admit, but realize and deplore. In order to be a true Christian we must also be able to recount the gracious dealings of God with us in choosing us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before

him in love, in redeeming us from sin and wrath in a way most wonderful, mysterious and expensive, in calling us out of darkness into his marvelous light, in justifying us freely through the atonement of Jesus Christ, in not only implanting a principle of spiritual life within us at first, but also in preserving and strengthening his grace in our souls, in giving us peace and joy in believing, in comforting and sustaining us under all the vexations which crowd this mortal life, and in placing within us the happy hope of being by and by freed from sin and all its consequences, and coming into close personal relationship with our exalted Saviour where we may share his glory. Our holy religion is thus felt in its inward and spiritual operation by every genuine believer. And this experimental Christianity the Gospel minister who is careful to declare the whole counsel of God does not fail to teach. Nor does he stop here, while he constantly and strenuously insists on the doctrines of grace as matters that are to be believed and felt, he also urges the precepts of the divine word and inculcates the necessity of holiness as at once plainly prescribed and powerfully enforced in that system denominated "the counsel of God." Instead of entertaining his hearers with mere theological disquisitions which have nothing to recommend them but their logical precision, he is careful to exhibit divine truth in its practical influence and bearings. He constantly entreats his brethren to magnify the power of grace by walking with unshaken firmness and increased speed in the way of Gods commandments. Reminding them that real religious knowledge is practical ; that true faith is a living, powerful, influential principle, a never failing fountain of obedience ; he extorts them to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and to show by their conduct that the sanctifying inspirations of the Gospel are minute and universal, reaching every situation in life and every department of duty, and regulating alike the dispositions of the heart and the outward conduct. He charges them to see that there be nothing wanting which may contribute to the completeness of their character, but to "give all diligence to add to their faith, virtue ; to virtue, knowledge ; to knowledge, temperance ; to temperance, patience ; to patience, godliness ; to godliness, brotherly kindness ; to brotherly kindness, charity." He reminds them that this practical religion is the best evidence of Christian character, and that to it reference will be made in the judgment as the reason of their fitness and the measure of their preparedness for the blessedness of heaven. And he begs

them ever and anon to depend on the grace of God, and pray earnestly for it, that they may be strengthened with all might in the inner man and enabled to go on their way with spiritual experience increasing and ripening at every step.

All this is embraced in "the counsel of God," which the Gospel minister must faithfully declare if he would be pure from the blood of those who attend his ministrations. It is, however, not so much with the fullness of our exhibitions of divine truth, as with their faithfulness, that our sense of accountability has to do, or rather it is with the former as included in the latter. There is a sense in which the defectiveness of a ministers exhibitions will not jeopard his salvation. Ministers of the gospel are men of similar passions with others, and, like their associates, they, too, possess circumscribed powers. And in consequence of the feebleness and limited reach of their mental faculties, and from the influence of other causes, their exhibitions of truth may be partial and distorted. While they are in the main honest and devoted to their work they, may on the one hand, deal too much in doctrinal discussion, or on the other, give their sermons too much of a practical cast. They may fail to present to their hearers lucid expositions of the scriptures, or they may not prophesy according to the proposition of faith, but give certain doctrines a greater prominence than others of equal and even of vaster importance in the Christian system. But still if the christian minister does not shun to declare all "the counsel of God," if he does not walk in craftiness, nor handle the eternal Word deceitfully, if through the influence of shame or fear he does not keep back anything from his hearers which would be profitable for them, he cannot suspect himself of unfaithfulness. The manner in which he proclaims divine truth he may be obliged to own, is very weak and imperfect, but if he is conscious that he has never concealed it from his hearers, and never corrupted it, he may rest satisfied that he is pure from their blood ; he may call heaven and earth and their own consciences to witness against them that if they perish their blood will be upon their own heads.

Ministers are placed as watchman on the walls of Zion, and to each of them the Master says, "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." Nor is this a trifling threat. This requisition will assuredly be made. In the divine estimation souls are of unutterable value. This is manifest from the vast expense at which God has been for their redemption.